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27 March 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable William J. Porter
Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Department of State

SUBJECT : Proposed Reduction in the Department of State's
Contingent Currently on TDY in South Vietnam

1. I have been informed by Mr. Popple, the Department's representative on WSAG Working Group C, that Mr. Hall has proposed the withdrawal of approximately half of the Department's group which is on temporary duty in South Vietnam. As you know, these personnel were sent to participate in the "Provincial Information Collection" effort -- an integral and important component of the overall collection program designed to assist in assessing both Vietnamese sides' compliance with the settlement agreement. Along with the personnel made available by the Embassy for the "Provincial Observer Corps," these officers were to be our eyes and ears on the ground.

2. The establishment of the four Consulates General on 1 March has allowed the deployment of these officers to the field and a resultant increase in the volume and quality of reporting on what is transpiring in the countryside -- via inputs to the Consulates' daily "Ceasefire and Political Sitreps," ceasefire spot reports, and Consular Officers' reports of visits to the provinces. While the reporting to date has increased our knowledge and been valuable, it is anticipated that it will improve significantly as the officers settle into their jobs, make contacts, and get out into the field. Thus, a drawdown over the next three months would appear to be especially precipitous.

SAC Chrono ✓
Working Group C

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3. In view of the above, and as Chairman of WSAG Working Group C, I strongly recommend that no reduction in the Department's TDY contingent be considered at this time. Though the reporting of the Provincial Observers will never be able to replace the voluminous take which has been available in the past, it has, thus far, and will, increasingly, provide an invaluable source of information on developments within South Vietnam. In the present situation, given the evaluations and assessments the policy levels of government expect the intelligence community to make, we simply cannot afford to curtail any source of data, particularly a source as currently and potentially valuable as the information and on-the-ground evaluations provided by our Provincial Observers.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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